

**WILLIAMSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION #35  
Wednesday, February 8, 2006**

A work session of the Williamsburg Planning Commission was held on Wednesday, February 8, 2006, at 4:00 p.m., in Conference Room 3A, Williamsburg Municipal Building, 401 Lafayette Street.

**ATTENDANCE AND CALL TO ORDER**

Present were Commissioners Young, Pons, McBeth, Friend and Hertzler. Absent was Commissioner Rose. Also present was Planning Director Nester, Zoning Administrator Murphy and City Manager Tuttle.

Mr. Young called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m., and announced that Open Forums would be held before each of the topics discussed.

**OPEN FORUM FOR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

David Kranbuehl, 201 Harrison Avenue, presented numerous suggestions for the Capital Improvement Program:

- The wires on the east end of Lafayette Street proposed for undergrounding are not very visible – money would be better spent on the west end of Lafayette Street, which has some of the most unsightly wires in the City.
- The Richmond Road sidewalk between Scotland Street and College Corner should be one of the most important priorities – it is more important than the Lafayette Street sidewalks.
- A “Residential Neighborhood Improvements” category should be created for the CIP to consolidate the various improvements into one section of the plan.
- The need for a new City Hall will be reduced by the new building proposed for WRHA and Human Services, which will free up space in the Municipal Building. The addition to the Fire Department for offices and EOC will also address current pressing needs. City Hall plans could be put off until 2008-2009.
- Planning Commission should exercise its role in the CIP process.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Mr. Nester and Mr. Tuttle reviewed the proposals in the proposed CIP with Commissioners. Discussion centered on the following issues:

Quarterpath Road

- Mr. Young asked about the possibility of underground wiring in conjunction with the street construction. Mr. Tuttle said that the developer was not able to donate

any significant funds for undergrounding the wires – it would cost about \$1 million for the City to underground wires in this section. Mr. Tuttle said that if this is added to the CIP, it would push other projects further back.

- Mr. Hertzler suggested installing conduits for future underground wiring, but wait until later to bury the wires. Mr. Tuttle said that that could be investigated, but that another way to address the issue is to rebuild the above ground wires and neaten them up.
- Mr. Young said that there is no time like the present to initiate the project.
- Mr. Pons said that the unique situation with Quarterpath Road is that it is about to be improved, which is the logical time to bury the wires.

#### Underground Wiring

- Mr. Tuttle noted that underground the east end Lafayette Street wires is suggested because it is an economical project, and that it will allow the trees adjacent to the Historic Area to grow out over the road and re-establish the tree canopy instead of having to be trimmed every year. He said that he agrees with Mr. Kranbuehl that the wires on the west end of Lafayette Street are ugly, but it will take much more than \$200,000 to solve the problem. He said that if the Commission feels that the east end of Lafayette Street should be a low priority, he would like to have that communicated to him.

#### Sidewalks

- Mr. Hertzler said that the improvement of the sidewalks from the dellys to College Corner is a high priority. Mr. Tuttle noted that the worst section of sidewalk is between College Delly and Wawa, and that this is included as a part of the Braxton Court project – he said that he would like to do the sidewalk in brick if possible, but that brick is twice the cost of concrete sidewalk. Mr. Hertzler said that he is in favor of brick sidewalks. Mr. Tuttle also noted opportunities to improve the sidewalk in front of the Presbyterian Church in conjunction with their building improvements. Mr. Tuttle said that where possible, it is preferable to do a joint venture with adjoining property owners.

#### Stormwater Management

- Mr. Pons asked about the condition of the City's stormwater management system. Mr. Tuttle reviewed the status of storm sewer, sanitary sewer and water systems. Mr. Nester noted that a stormwater master plan was prepared in 1996, and that CIP proposals are based on the recommendations contained in that plan.
- Mrs. McBeth noted that a lot of repair work is done in older neighborhoods, and suggested that a more pro-active program to rehabilitate utility systems in these areas would be desirable. Mr. Tuttle said that this is being done, and that he would like to see additional effort. He noted that massive replacement of utilities is very expensive.

### Street Lighting

- Mr. Young asked about improvements to residential street lighting. Mr. Tuttle noted that the street lights recently installed in The Coves was in an area that had no lighting. He said that it is a City responsibility to provide lighting, and that The Coves was done at City cost because there was not an existing street lighting system. He said that money is in the budget to add lights to the system throughout the City every year.
- Mr. Kranbuehl suggested upgrading existing lighting systems in residential neighborhoods.
- Mr. Tuttle suggested the possibility of burying wires in neighborhoods where they only serve the street lights – that is a much less expensive option than burying wires that provide electric service to homes and businesses. Mr. Tuttle also said that upgrading of existing fixtures is also needed.
- Mr. Hertzler suggested creating a neighborhood upgrade program (cost sharing), and asked if there is a way to do that. Mr. Tuttle said that “re-lamping” would be a City cost, and would not require cost sharing. He said that there is a 50-50 cost sharing program for underground wiring.

### Parks

- Mr. Tuttle said that a meeting was held on February 7 with residents of the Strawberry Plains area to discuss improvements to their neighborhood park. This is covered under the Park Development line item.

### Public Safety

- Mr. Nester noted that a new Fire Station is planned for Ironbound Road adjacent to High Street. Mr. Tuttle noted that we have what we need from an equipment (vehicles) standpoint for the new station, but that additional personnel will be need to staff the station.

### General Government

- Mr. Tuttle said the first plans will be for the WRHA to construct its new building, which will also house the Human Services department. This building does not show in the City’s CIP because it is being constructed by the WRHA – the City will be a tenant in this building. The next phase will be to construct the addition to the Fire Station for offices and EOC. These projects will free up space in the Municipal Building to expand the Finance Department and possibly to move the Registrar to the Municipal Building. The ultimate fate of the Stryker Building will be a decision to be made by City Council in the future.

There was a general discussion about the funding of the Capital Improvements Program. Mr. Pons noted that there are a lot more things that money could be spent on, and funds other than sales tax revenue could be used. Mr. Tuttle said that reserves are used to fund the CIP as well as sales tax. He said it is a plus to be able to use sales tax revenue for CIP, since a lot of jurisdictions use this for their operating budget. He said another source of funding (used for the 3<sup>rd</sup> High School) is debt financing, which

requires sales tax revenue to be used for debt service. Mr. Tuttle noted the importance of maintaining a healthy reserve fund, and this is discussed every year at the City Council retreat. He said that this allows the City to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities, such as was done for the purchase of the Holly Hills property for open space.

Commissioners thanked Mr. Tuttle for being present to discuss the CIP.

## **OPEN FORUM ON THE DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES**

Victor Smith, 140 Chandler Court, again spoke on the need to continue architectural review for PUDs, specifically Counselor's Close. Mr. Young said that this is best addressed by City Council at their public hearing. Mr. Hertzler said that this affects areas that we are trying hard to protect, impacting the downtown area. Mrs. McBeth noted that the line has to be drawn somewhere, and that areas can only be included based on architectural significance and age – Counselor's Close has neither.

Based on this discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to recommend that City Council look at ways to expand the regulations to protect neighborhoods adjacent to the AP District, because what happens in these neighborhoods has a direct impact on the quality and character of the AP District. The Commission noted that it does not intend this recommendation to delay the adoption of the Design Review Guidelines and associated zoning ordinance amendments, but to lay the groundwork for further consideration of adjacent neighborhoods.

The Commission discussed the three proposals made by Vice Mayor Haulman, and the ARB's response concerning these proposals.

1. If existing artificial siding cannot be replaced in kind because the existing siding is no longer available in the market (for example asbestos shingles, some types of aluminum siding, etc.), the ARB may consider replacement with other types of artificial siding.

***It was the consensus of the Commission to recommend allowing replacement of original synthetic materials on a case-by-case basis with like synthetic materials such as:***

- ***Aluminum to vinyl or cementitious siding.***
- ***Vinyl to cementitious siding.***
- ***Asbestos to cementitious siding.***
- ***Masonite to cementitious siding.***

***It was the consensus of the Commission not to recommend that wood substitute materials (masonite or asbestos) be allowed to be replaced with aluminum or vinyl siding. In all cases, synthetic siding could be replaced with wood siding or brick.***

2. If removal of vinyl, aluminum, or some other type of siding material would so damage the underlying wood or brick as to require the replacement of the underlying material, the siding shall be replaced with brick, horizontal wood, or cementitious siding that resembles horizontal wood. ***It was the consensus of the Commission to recommend not approving this suggestion because of the difficulty of determining whether or not the underlying wood or brick would be damaged.***
3. In the AP-2 and AP-3, if existing wood or brick siding is so deteriorated over a significant portion of the structure (50 percent or more) as to require replacement, the ARB may consider replacement with brick, horizontal wood, or cementitious siding that resembles horizontal wood. ***It was the consensus of the Commission to recommend not approving this suggestion because it rewards neglect.***

Mrs. Murphy said that the Commission's comments would be presented to City Council at their February 9 public hearing.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Mr. Nester presented revised drafts of Chapter 8 - Neighborhoods and Housing, Chapter 10 - Commercial and Economic Development, and Chapter 12 - Implementation. He said that a further revised draft of the Implementation section was distributed this evening incorporating additional implementation measures for Neighborhoods - these measures are already in the text for Chapter 8, but needed to be also discussed in the implementation chapter. Mr. Nester noted that this was a suggestion that was made by Mr. Kranbuehl.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Jesse Young, Chairman  
Williamsburg Planning Commission